

# TROJA CHÂTEAU PRAGUE





*Southern front of Troja Château – staircase*



*Château terrace with Bombelli's ceramic vases*

*Southern front of Troja Château with staircase*



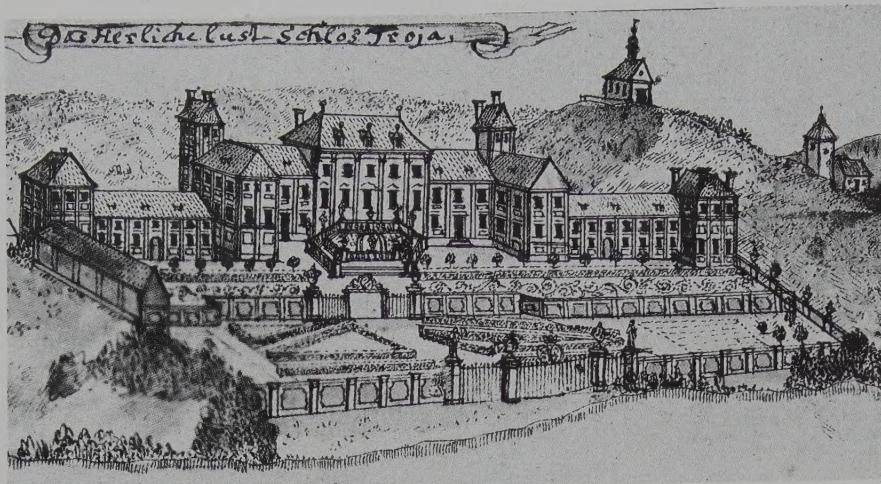
## MUNICIPAL ART GALLERY PRAGUE

The renovation of Troja Château was effected on the basis of a decision adopted by the Municipal National Committee of Prague. The project was launched in 1977 and reached completion in 1989. The total costs of reconstruction work amounted to 207 million Czechoslovak crowns.

The design and construction phases of the project were, due to their extent and demanding technical requirements, subdivided into 20 construction units. Within the framework of the entire project a complete reconstruction of all building in the area, i. e. the château, the out-buildings, the orangeries, the gardener's house and the building in Povltavská Street No. 6/68, was carried out. The project also covered the reconstruction of the historic garden, including the renovation of the garden paths and other communications and the construction of the required engineering networks.

The duration of the reconstruction project was determined by the extent and technical and technological requirements of the construction and restoration work covering the château and the out-buildings. Work on the fresco compositions at first-floor level of the château necessitated the evolution of a totally new technology now registered as a patent-protected innovative technical procedure. Dehumidification of the buildings proved a no less challenging task. This required laying bare the entire brickwork structure of the château right down to the foundation masonry. The marble floors, the inlay-decorated door at first-floor level of the château, the period metalwork and ironwrought details and the entire pictorial and stucco decoration were restored to their authentic appearance. At present, Troja Château is equipped with all the technical facilities meeting the requirements of the contemporary user.

The reconstruction of the garden enclosures necessitated adaptations consistent with the style and spirit of Mathey's original design, primarily the dislodgment of the main depth-level axis of the area from the surrounding patterns of verdure so as to open up the view of Prague Castle. Similarly, all other vistas in the garden and the orchard had to be restored in period detail. The landscaping project involving adaptations effected in the orchard at the lower and upper space-levels is a free replica of the original historic garden modelled on period engravings and plans of Troja Château. At the lower groundfloor level, at the point of intersection of the chief communication axes, the 17th century fountain was reconstructed on the basis of archaeological evidence. The fountain has a natural counterpart in the preserved period sculptures. The protected trees remained preserved in the garden.



F. B. Werner, Troja. General view of the château and surroundings, 1752

Troja Château from south-west

Panoramic view of Troja Château

The following organizations shared significantly in the reconstruction of Troja Château: Construction Enterprise of the Capital City Prague – Construction of Utility Buildings

Designer: *State Institute for the Reconstruction of Historic Towns and Buildings*

Chief Designer: *Milan Pavlík*

Garden Landscaping Project: *Oto Kuča*

Head of Project: *Pavel Halas*

Construction work: *Prague Building and Construction Enterprise*

Artistic craftsmanship: *Dílo, enterprise of the Czech Fund of Fine Arts*

*Centre of Applied Arts*

*Fine Crafts*

*Cement-workers',*

*Masons' and Sculptors' Cooperative*

*Geoindustria*

*North Bohemian Timber Yards*

Communications and Landscape Gardening: *Prague Roadbuilding and Water Communications Enterprise*

*Orchards, Forests, Gardens – Prague*

*JZD 1 máj Farming Cooperative, Brno*





*Aerial view of Troja Château with garden,  
June 1989*

*Grand Hall with mural paintings by Abraham Godyn (1691–1697)*

Troja Château situated on the northern fringe of the Prague Valley, in an area which in the past was almost totally covered by vineyards, was built in the late 17th century under Count Wenceslaus Adalbert of Sternberg. In appearance the château betrays Italian architectural influence. The style is clearly modelled on the Italian 'villa' type of country residence with interiors and furnishings designed to serve seasonal uses. The well-premeditated architectural conception skilfully integrating the château into the surrounding countryside cannot be solely attributed to the builder's whimsical flight of fancy, but was obviously motivated by the endeavour of the Czech magnates of the day to increase the political prestige of Bohemia's aristocracy after the Battle of the White Mountain. This assumption is confirmed by the fact that the château forms a natural extension of the Stromovka royal game preserve on the opposite bank of the Vltava. In the late 17th century, the game preserve – a favourite centre of feudal and royal pastimes – still lacked the type of chateau architecture complying in form and function with the requirements of the fashionable world. If Prague after the Battle of the White Mountain which sealed the fate of Bohemia was to restore its former image of a well frequented European metropolis, or at least regain a status of dignity among the cities of the Habsburg Monarchy – and that was the shared ambition of the more enlightened members of the Czech aristocracy – then it clearly needed useful and beautiful buildings befitting the life-style of the leisured classes. All these considerations crystallized in the idea of a comfortable and spacious summer residence, a country mansion which in the event of the Emperor's visit could serve as a hunting lodge for the sovereign and his retinue. In style and spirit, the interior of the château was to express loyalty to the Habsburg Dynasty, a tribute to the Imperial House with symbolic references to Czech statehood and to the ambitions of Bohemia's native aristocracy.

These intentions were well served by the economically unimportant, yet – in relation to the game preserve – ideally situated estate of Zadní Ovenec. (The name Troja was first used in the early 18th century). The owner of the estate was Wenceslaus Adalbert of Sternberg (? 1640–1708), a man of fine erudition and selective tastes, an ambitious Czech nobleman whose broad cosmopolitan outlook was shaped by his extensive travels abroad. As a young man, Šternberk visited all the major cultural centres of 17th century Europe. Despite his promising career as a civil servant, Šternberk did not possess a palace of his own in Prague. This was clearly a disadvantage for a man of his rank and status. To mitigate this long-standing worry, in the prime of his manhood – in 1679 (or perhaps a year earlier) – Šternberk began to construct a magnificently conceived country residence. His ambitious and costly project was fraught with many complications. The estate lay in a remote locality which from Prague could be reached only with great difficulties as virtually the one and only access road led through the game preserve. The large-sized bricks for Troja Château were fired directly on the construction site and the other vital building material – stone for the masons' use – was supplied by the Tismice quarry near Český Brod. Judging by the rough total of 100 craftsmen then working on the site, the project must have gathered momentum in 1680. But the promising start proved short-lived. The Count's plan to finalize the work at the earliest possible date was thwarted by the disastrous wave of plague epidemics sweeping the region in the same year. The ensuing hiatus delayed the completion of the project so that it was not before Count Sternberg's death that work on the interior of the château and on the adjacent park and garden enclosures was definitely concluded.

The construction was begun by the Prague architect Domenico Orsi de Orsini and after his death in 1679 was continued, for a period of eight years, by his pupil and immediate suc-



Grand Hall. Paintings by Abraham Godyn (1691–1697). Allegory of the Triumph of Emperor Leopold I (detail)

Grand Hall. Paintings by Abraham Godyn (1691–1697). Allegory of the struggle of Western Christendom against The Sublime Porte and scenes from the history of the House of Habsburg







Despite the fact that the original space enclosure of Troja Château has not been preserved in its entirety, the basic compositional structure has remained unchanged. The passage of intervening centuries has not diminished the appeal of Mathey's conception and the central idea emerges with remarkable clarity even today. The guiding principle of Mathey's ambitious plan was obviously the chief architectural axis designed to foreground the dominating landscape pattern and the architectural and ideological imagery of Prague Castle and its towers. Conceived as the central visual feature, the symbols of Czech statehood were thus intended to attract the visitor's immediate attention. True, Mathey's speculative venture ignored the natural geographical configuration of the surrounding landscape and hence immensely complicated the implementation phase and increased the costs of construction on a staggering scale. At the same time, though, all these difficulties acted as a spur to architectural incentive, a quality which Mathey possessed in superabundance, for he was the imaginative type of builder. He responded to the challenge with great resourcefulness and ingenuity, applying all his architectural skills and landscaping stratagems in a spirit successfully emulating the previous conception of D. Fontana's and B. L. Bernini's reconstruction of Rome.

To appreciate the well-premeditated layout and sophisticated compositional details of Mathey's conception, the contemporary visitor is advised not to use the modern entrance, as this came into existence at a much later date as an inorganic innovation motivated by changed traffic conditions. Instead, he should enter Troja Château from the south, i. e. from the Vltava River and the Stromovka park, through the gala entrance formed by a Baroque lattice structure (today reconstructed in authentic detail) between the two orangeries. Following this access route, he will then reach the main axis of the château and gain insight into the concatenated space patterns and clusters of buildings characterized by a well-graduated scale of architectural emphases and a lively variety of summer-house views and vistas. Following the axis of the château, the visitor is bound to reach the culminating point of Mathey's architectural composition, viz. the garden staircase in front of the château and the Grand Hall. The architectural axis has a natural continuation on the opposite side of the building. Crossing the northern portal on the groundfloor level of the château and the courtyard with outbuildings, it blends imperceptibly with the circular staircase and with another portal before merging with the natural contours of the former vineyard and the surrounding countryside.

The villa itself, an example of effective architectural gradation, towers on an artificially built terrace which on the north-western side is hewn into a natural slate-rock formation.

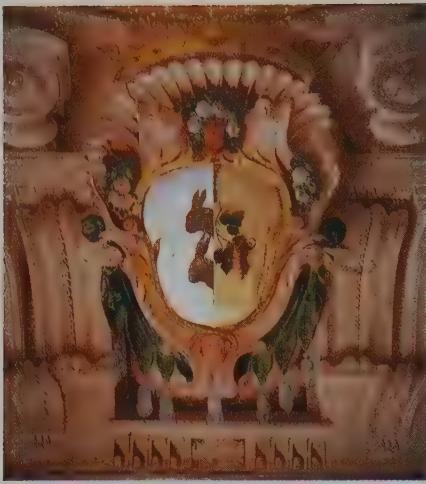
*Eastern front of Troja Château with terrace*

*Room with allegorical painting (ceiling) by Francesco and Giovanni Francesco Marchetti (1689–1690) and mural paintings portraying Chinese landscapes*

*Room with ceiling fresco decorations by Francesco and Giovanni Francesco Marchetti (1689–1690)*

sor Silvestro Carloni. The final authorship, though, was claimed by Jean Baptiste Mathey (? 1630–1696), a painter and architect of Burgundian origin. Mathey, who benefitted a good deal from his several years of training spent in Rome, was a protégé of the Archbishop of Prague John Frederic of Wallenstein. In 1675, Mathey designed the archiepiscopal residence at Hradčany and the Château of Dux (Duchcov). On Valdštejn's behest, Mathey also designed the Church of the Knights of the Cross in the Old Town of Prague, the Plasy prelature and part of the Strahov Monastery. The Archbishop, who himself was a generous sponsor of several major construction projects, recommended the services of his favourite architect to Count Šternberk. Well versed in the latest landscaping architectural strategies, Mathey was an ideal master-builder for a challenging project of the scope and scale envisaged for Troja Château. Mathey, however, was not apprenticed in any of the masons' guilds and, according to the strict regulations then valid, was not allowed to implement his projects on his own. As a result, in 1685, a bitter conflict flared up between Mathey and the Prague masons' guild then working at Ovenec under Carloni's guidance. In the ensuing clash of professional rivalries Mathey suffered a major setback and in the heat of the dispute Carloni denied Mathey's authorship of the project. There was only one way in which Count Šternberk, who became Mathey's second patron, could benefit from the artist's architectural acumen. He accepted Mathey's challenging plan (a design which the local builders were clearly unable to provide) and entrusted Mathey with general supervision of the construction work. Recent architectural research carried out during the renovation of Troja Château has confirmed the integrity of Mathey's conception from start to finish. As no major changes were implemented during Mathey's life-time in the subsequent phases of construction, Mathey can today be regarded as the incontestable author of the project.





*Grand Hall with paintings by Abraham Godyn (1691–1697). Sternberg coat of arms*

*Stables with fresco compositions by Abraham Godyn (? 1697–1698). Proserpine Carried Off by Hades (detail).*

cluded, in the groundplan of the individual sections of the garden and of the entire area, the use of rectangular schemes customary in the architecture of the day. Nevertheless, J. B. Mathey mastered the situation with remarkable flair. His experiments in illusion-perspective matched by his delightful geometrical whims and all manner of morphological sophistries testify to his subtle sense of form. The terrace on which the château rests and the upper space-level of the garden intimating an irregular bastion structure of an oblique scarp-like shape usher the visitor, through the lower entrance section decorated with an ornamental plant composition, into a space enclosure full of irregularly distributed masses and obliquely divergent lines – all skilfully disguised and hence not perceptible at close range. The initial section of the platform connecting the lower space-level with the terrace employs, through the elaboration of the counter-scarp obliquely directed towards the groundplan of the garden, the same illusory effect as that explored by L. Bernini in his design of the front-space of St Peter's basilica in Rome.

An equally ingenious differentiation pattern characterizes the eastern orchard landscaped in the shape of a contorted oblique-angled parallelogram. Mathey's resourceful design strategy is documented by the sophisticated handling of the contact of oblique path axes and the oblique course of the wall encircling this space pattern. The wall was originally decorated with painted vistas which gave it a delightful finishing touch, but today all these details are irretrievably lost. The pilasters, cornices and plinths which in the past framed the vistas are still turned towards the oblique directions of the paths as a surviving fragment of what once used to be a formally perfect morphological drollery. A similar style of differentiation was applied in landscaping the opposite western orchard which ceased to exist due to the expansion of the adjacent zoological garden.

The entire composition was adorned with numerous fountains decorated with the sculptured figures of Naiads and Tritons riding the waves in their shells and conches. Another detail of the garden were rockeries with gushing springs – a feature typical of the Early Baroque style of Italian villa architecture. The huge fountain in the lower section of the garden, reconstructed in authentic period detail on the basis of the recently excavated foundation, has a direct prototype in the lateral fountain of Piazza Navona, Rome.

The château, the out-buildings and the two orangeries display a high standard of craftsmanship. There is much to admire whether one thinks of the fine inlay work on the doors, the engraved door-knobs, handles and locks, the parquet and marble floors compounded into sophisticated ornamental patterns, the richly decorated stucco ceilings, the tile stoves, the lively colours of the façades

The opposite side of the terrace is formed by huge pieces of rock piled up to the required height. The central, dominating section is formed by the Grand Hall at first-floor level sprawling lengthwise throughout the entire building and exceeding in height the lateral wings by a whole storey. The corridor leading from the Grand Hall to both sides is graced with a sweeping line of doors leading to adjacent rooms. The corridor leads to the two oval-shaped staircases of two-storeyed belvedere-style turrets completing the building on each side vertically and horizontally. The main gala entrance mediating direct access from the groundfloor section to the Grand Hall is the outer, two-wing oval-shaped staircase, actually the most valuable and the most admired architectural feature of the Troja country residence, one which along with the Grand Hall forms the central core of the symbolic imagery of this architectural landmark. The upper landing affords a global view of the garden below with the majestic skyline of Prague Castle in the distance. The sculptural compositions portraying Olympian deities and their triumph over the rebellious race of the Giants (Gigantes) inspire meditations on the timeless order governing the world of men and their rulers. Through the stylistically well-proportioned portal dominated by the statue of the goddess of Victory and through the doorway decorated with fine inlay work, the visitor enters the Grand Hall designed as a solemn tribute to the Habsburg Dynasty.

The groundfloor section of the building was used by the servants. The entire basement area still encompasses spacious wine-cellars. In the second-depth plan, in the direction leading towards the northern slope of the vineyard, Mathey's conception respected the principles of Roman urban architecture: the main building is framed by long one-wing stables and coach-sheds flanked on each side by one-storeyed summer-houses.

The main axis plotted in counterposition to the natural course of the contour lines pre-





enhancement of architectural finesse by sculptural compositions and paintings.

Viewed in the context of Czech and Central European cultural history, the sculptural compositions and paintings decorating Troja Château represent a unique creative achievement. The true value of Troja sculptures and paintings resides in their close association and integration with the overall architectural conception. At the time when Troja Château was under construction, Bohemia, however, still lacked the type of sculptor and painter capable of handling this demanding task at the required level of competence. Symptomatically, the construction of Troja Château coincided with the crucial period of change marking progression from the Early to the Late Baroque art. Bohemia and Prague in particular were experiencing the influx of the first harbingers of new schools and conceptions. As the native generation of Czech Baroque artists grew into creative maturity, the creative ferment of the 1690s crystallized into a wide variety of different modes and styles of expression.

The entire conception of the château reflects the endeavour to secure a perfectly balanced, proportional relationship of forms and shapes almost academic in their compliance with the rules of the chosen system and order. The style of fenestration, the differentiation and arrangement of the portals, plinths and cornices are effected with great accuracy and sophistication. But some of the architectural motifs traceable within this formally perfect system develop the style typical of Roman mannerism. This stylistic allegiance is reflected in the combination of the high order of the central part of the villa with the use of fleur-de-lis frames, the fleur-de-lis motif in general and the details of the column bases. Most of the points of contact with mannerism reveal a bond of inner kinship with the art of Bernini who was a near-contemporary of Mathey. The link with Bernini's art is particularly obvious in the symbiosis of a high architectural order and naturalist motifs.

and the wealth of the famous terracotta vases gracing the terrace of the château and the natural vistas.

The well-proportioned architectural conception of the château planned in balanced relationship with the garden and the surrounding countryside – so typical for the integrative style of a Baroque architect whose taste was shaped by Roman and French models – places Troja among the finest specimens of Czech Baroque architecture. Sternberg's summer villa concludes one major phase in the history of Baroque art in Bohemia while foreshadowing at the same time the new prospects ahead. The monumental style of 17th century architecture was to be discarded in favour of a more modest grouping of masses, a more playful contour-line, a more intriguing style of roof design, the use of belvedere turrets and oval-shaped groundplans. The keynote was a more sensitive regard for the natural surroundings with emphasis shifting towards the search for natural 'points de vue', the profusion of architectural vistas, terraces, double flights of stairs and the

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*Grand Hall with paintings by Abraham Godyn (1691–1697). Malzano coat of arms*

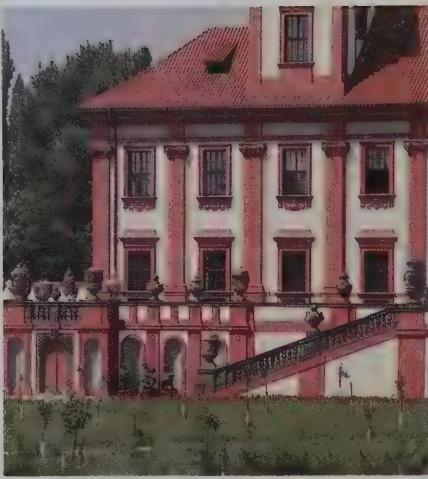
*Stables with paintings by Abraham Godyn (? 1697–1698)*

*Southern front of Troja Château with garden*









North-eastern view of Troja Château

Portal of northern front

tures – the work of Paul Heerman (presumably finished after J. J. Heerman's death) – marks the completion of the entire composition. A work of much later origin and of different stylistic provenance is the series of sculptured busts ascribed to the Brokof family (Helena Smetáčková).

The defeat of the rebellious Giants (Gigantes) – since the days of Antiquity commonly confounded with the plight of the kindred race of the Titans (Titanes) – is a theme which in Troja Château received extensive sculptural and pictorial coverage. Scenes depicting this mythological event adorn both the outer and the inner flights of stairs of the château. But it is the central idea of the Grand Hall that reveals the true message of this impressive mythological image.

Mural painting was an art which in the history of Bohemia's Early Baroque culture developed with considerable delay. The sculptural creations of Italian master stucco-decorators severely restricted and indeed often suppressed further advances in mural painting. A more appreciative attitude to the craft crystallized in the final decades of the 17th century. And the scene where the major reshuffle of priorities actually occurred (although at first the change was not fully consistent) was Troja Château. In 1689, Francesco Marchetti (1640–1707), a native of Trent, was enrolled for service. The Italian "cavaliere" arrived in Prague with his family. The Marchetti-signed detailed Latin inscriptions tell us that Francesco Marchetti and his son Giovanni were entrusted with the task of decorating the walls of the château. Marchetti's mural paintings cover a thematically wide-ranging and demanding subject-matter. Their chief appeal resides in thematic variety rather than in the elaboration of visually effective allegories exploring a rich vein of mythological inspiration. The paintings are sometimes framed with a soft, smooth low-relief type of stucco decoration leaving no more than supplementary space for painting proper. Marchetti's self-congratulatory description extol-

ling his own technical mastery should not mislead us. He clearly overestimated his actual performance when in one of his "progress reports" he described his work as a "model of industry and utter dedication, abounding in ever new ideas meeting the most selective tastes and pleasing the most discerning eye, or – as Signor Mathey put it – never before has he seen, or heard of a work of this level of excellence..." True, Marchetti's merits cannot be ignored, although admittedly his paintings often reveal a compositionally uncontrollable drift towards an unwieldy profusion of human types, movements and gestures – obviously deriving from different Cinquecento source-models. His art would pass muster in the provincial regions of Italy to which he dispatched his eloquent resorts praising his Prague fortunes. But his inflated eulogies soon gave way to a note of pitiful lament, once the Count told him he no longer needed his services and – contrary to his previous promise (so Marchetti claimed) – forbade him to paint in the Grand Hall.

The growing dissatisfaction with Marchetti's performance was confirmed by the Count's queries addressed to other painters in Italy as early as 1689. His search concentrated on Bologna, the very centre of mural painting and stage design. In February 1690, Šternberk's Bologna-based art agent Bartolomeo Cortini informed the Count that he had found competent painters willing to work in Prague and join the Count's service without delay. The recommended artists were masters of figural and quadrature painting and illusionist architecture. Meanwhile, Marchetti continued working on his full-scale Prague projects including paintings decorating the ceiling and numerous oil paintings (only some of them have been preserved). Marchetti's most interesting work dating from 1690 is the cycle of oil paintings portraying scenes from the life of Jesus Christ. The paintings cover the walls of the Chapel of Trója Château.

Marchetti's self-confidence must have suffered a fatal blow in 1690 when two 'Nordics', the Flemish brothers Abraham and Isaac Godyn, arrived in Troja in response to the Count's invitation. Of the two Godyns, Abraham was the more competent artist. Compared with the range and scale of his work, Isaac's creative achievements appear negligible. The sole evidence of Isaac Godyn's long stay in Bohemia is the minor group of still-life paintings exploring hunting themes. Abraham Godyn, mentioned in Antwerp sources dating from 1679 and 1680 as the pupil of Hendrick Herregouts, is bound to remain one of the enigmatic personalities of 17th century painting, an artist who has incurred an aura of mystery as the author of a single, albeit extensive, set of paintings preserved in Troja Château. A shroud of mystery envelops his Italian fortunes. Period archive sources do not tell us how long he had stayed in Italy, who was





Portal of southern front of Troja Château

Detail of the enclosing Wall

October 1697, the very year marking the Battle of Zenta (11 September 1697) during which the Austrian armies commanded by Eugene of Savoy defeated the Turkish intruder. Shortly afterwards, in 1698, references to Godyn's life and work begin to fade out. The year of his death has never been specified with precision.

Ideologically, the interior design of the Grand Hall of Troja Château complies with the pattern typical of the so-called "Imperial Halls". In this case, of course, the tribute is paid exclusively to the sovereigns of the Habsburg Dynasty. The leitmotif develops two distinct strands of ancestral tradition. The first is built around the story of Rudolph, the first imperial figure in the Habsburg lineage. The message epitomizes the spiritual principle of the Habsburg rule, viz. piety summed up in the concept „*Pietas Austriaca*“). According to the genealogical legend, Rudolph hunting in the forests met a priest hurrying to administer the sacrament of Extreme Unction to a dying parishioner. Nobly, he offered the priest his own horse and the priest prophesied his future glory as Emperor. The divine reward bestowed on the House of Habsburg for their pious conduct is the victory over the archenemy of Christianity – The Sublime Porte (lit. the "exalted gate" – the Ottoman Empire), as expressed in the Triumph of Leopold I – the scene is heavily stylized in the spirit of Antiquity models. Both paintings cover the entire surface of the shorter walls and are „*interwoven*“ in the tapestries, a style of approach based on the "painting-within-painting" principle.

The imagery of the first painting shows four stage-like boxes one of which is prized open right at the architectural base to create space for the heraldic legend relating the origin of the Babenberg – Austrian emblem. The emblem itself is held by the claws of an eagle and protects the eagle's breast like a shield. The allusion is to Albert of Habsburg who after a victorious battle against the Turks stepped forward to pay homage to Emperor Conrad, his attire soaked in Saracen blood. But the sash he then wore – so the legend tells us – remained stainless, undefiled, white. The Emperor bestowed on him a coat of arms showing a white bar crossing a red field. Winged geniuses, holding a shield with a blue field from which three golden skylarks (allegedly the authentic heraldic symbol of the Habsburgs) fly upwards, proclaim the glory of the house. The opposite picture, above the scene depicting Leopold's triumph, shows the Turks with Tököly accompanied by the Furies opening Janus' temple – an act symbolizing the declaration of war on the Emperor. The infidels are charged by Archangel Michael, the leader of God's armies, holding a white shield with a red cross. Analogical scenic vistas adorning the longer sides portray further distinguished members of the Habsburg family

his master, patron or sponsor. Although we lack any clues that might shed stronger light on Godyn's Italian apprenticeship prior to his sudden arrival in Prague, it is clear that he must have gained a lot from this experience. On the other hand, he obviously assimilated only those aspects of the craft that proved compatible with his disciplined common-sense Nordic sensibility. The motifs of illusive architecture which he applied first in the long corridors of Troja Château, i. e. in settings excluding a more broadly-based integrated conception and hence singularly unconducive to this type of painting, were not entirely unknown in the Netherlands. But the fusion with Italian models – and Godyn, though by no means an uncritical follower of the latest fashion, possessed a fine instinct for the topical in art – is obvious throughout. Proud of his accomplished synthesis of architecture and figurative painting, he completed his work with a flourish – adding the signature "Abraham Godyn, Antverpiensis invenit et fecit 1690".

His patron, too, must have been satisfied, for Godyn proceeded, without delay, to work on his main commission – the pictorial decoration of the massive Grand Hall, a task which in the long-term plan was pre-eminently his own. Here he could prove his real prowess, apply all his skills, rally all his imaginative powers. The architecture and the surfaces of the hall were devoid of any plastic protrusions. The entire space was set apart for his own creative intervention. But Godyn took his time. How long his project actually lasted can be deduced partly from some of the explicit clues – the date inscribed on the painting decorating the ceiling reads 1693 – partly from the covert message coded in the form of two distichs facing each other. The first inscription reads as follows: "En spectator opus Triadi Martique dicatum / Pictum sex annis, arte labore meo, (AB. G.); the second, referring to the completion of the work: "Anno, que Caesar 30.000 Tracum / Fuderat in castris, termine laetus opus) XXVI. Octobris". It follows that the six-year long work was concluded on 26





*Southern front of the Troja Château with garden*

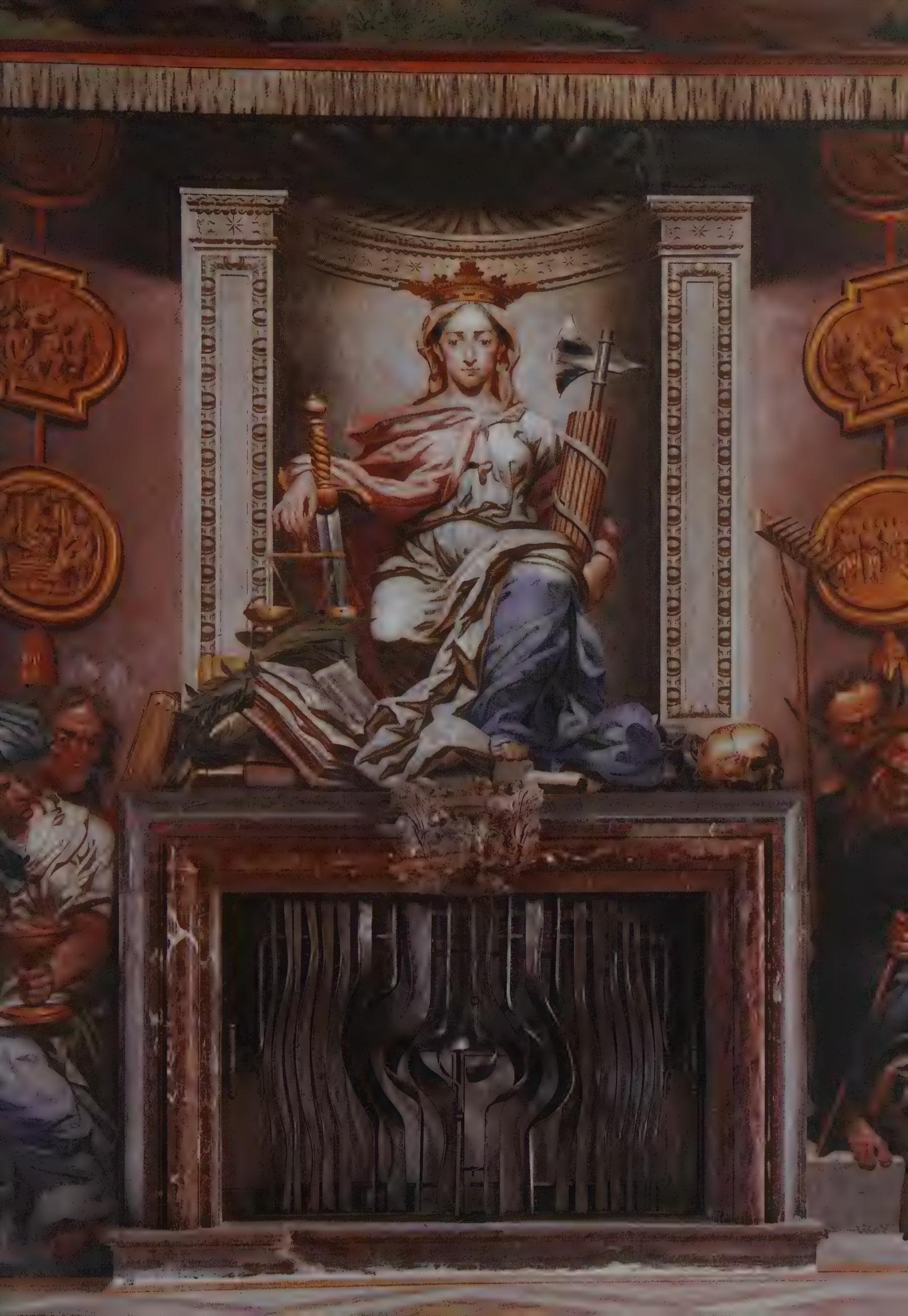
*Grand Hall. Paintings by Abraham Godyn (1691–1697). Personification of Justice and her adversaries.*

(some of the figures are monstrously contorted due to visual compression): the abdication of Charles V and his monastic retirement. The prudent policy of the Habsburgs favouring peace-seeking diplomacy rather than war conflicts is documented by the marriage of Philip, the son of Emperor Maximilian, with Juana of Aragon, a brilliant move uniting the vast Habsburg territories with Spain. Four Habsburg rulers are portrayed in monochromatic gold as statue-like figures. Similarly, a grisaille style of painting is applied in the busts and medallions portraying other illustrious members of the Habsburg family.

The enthusiasm following the victory over the Turk and the liberation of Christian territories from Muslim supremacy form the central subject-matter of the painting decorating the ceiling. The composition is symmetrically built around the central symbol of the Holy Trinity: the imagery consists of two angels holding the papal tiara above the head personifying Faith – here represented as coequal with the Church and hence possessing several attributes, viz. the Chalice and the Host (the hand rests on the eagle, the symbol of the Empire as the main protector of Faith-Church), the attribute of John the Evangelist and the Latin Cross. Turned towards Faith-Church is Hope, while Charity remains half-concealed as if the militant tenor of the composition allowed no space for the noble member of the Pauline triad. The Trinity of theological virtues is conveyed through the three parts of the Tetramorph. Significantly, only one of the four Evangelists is given a figural representation: in a solemn gesture St Mark holds up a bowl with the keys of the cities liberated from the rule of the Ottoman Empire. St Mark, genuflecting on a cloud with a flying angel beneath holding an open book with the inscription “Pax tibi, Marce, evangelista meus” (“May peace be with thee, Mark, my Evangelist”), is a symbol of the Venetian Republic. Another major figure of victorious Western Christendom is the Polish King Jan Sobieski, the hero of the liberation of

Vienna from the Turkish siege in 1683. He is portrayed with two captive Turks at his knees and holding a green banner turned downwards. Other details are the heraldic spread-eagle and the putto holding a scroll with the inscription “Invicta Polonia triumphans” (“Triumphant invincible Poland”). The figure personifying Hungary is graced with a crown held by a cherub. Hungary’s hand rests on the shoulder of the genuflecting representative of the liberated Hungarian towns holding the keys to their gates. The Church as the ally in this struggle is personified by the figure of St Peter. St Peter’s keys are held by a flying cherub, while the saint himself, seated on a cloud, looks upwards. St Leopold, towering in the centre, wields his customary attributes – the model replica of a cathedral (Klosterneuburg) and the banner of Lower Austria (azure field with five golden spread-eagles). The divine protectors of Bohemia were given a curt treatment in this eloquent tribute to Austrian supremacy. The Bohemian coat of arms appears as one of the four heraldic emblems placed above the entrances.

The human and animal figures of the Tetramorph are intimated by the hazy outline of the violet- and rose-coloured clouds from which they emerge. Their fluid, phantom-like contours acquire more solid shape and substance in the downward-scaled strata of the composition. The highest degree of plasticity and compression is achieved through the application of viscous paints producing a luminous ‘pastoso’ effect in the dominating symbols of Justice (accompanied by their adversaries – Ignorance and Self-Interest as the worst possible qualities of bad judges) and Victory. The two virtues are matched by an additional series of illusive gold-tinted reliefs with classical ‘exempla’ of fair judgments and martial triumphs. The entire composition communicates a singularly “readable” message. As one detail follows another, attention wanders from component to component in this lively panoply of symbols, emblems and ornamental motifs each possessing an appeal and fascination of its own whether one thinks of the lush colours of the mottled marble of the pilasters, the green grisaille compositions or the monochromatic and formally compact images. Due to the additive cumulation of individual particularities, the totality of this structural pattern does not develop into an illusion-based spatial metamorphosis of the type conjured up by the contemporary architectural creations of Andrea dal Pozzo and other masters of illusion perspective, primarily the Bologna painters, but reflects the spirit of the Late Renaissance and mannerism, especially in their Roman subvarieties (in this respect, Godyn’s style of painting is consonant with the intentions of Mathey’s architectural design). The purpose is to express the balanced relationship of tectonic resources. The final impression is not one of motion and activity, but rather of repose and



*View of the rooms decorated with mural paintings showing Chinese landscapes*

*Room with mural paintings showing Chinese landscapes*







riving from the Heermann workshop and designed as part of the interior decoration of Troja Château. The expressive personifications of the four seasons of the year are presumably the work of Paul Heerman. Loosely associated with these sculptures is the genre-portrait of a female midget conceived in a humorous vein – the midget enacts the role of a court jester (National Gallery collection; two of the four sculptures symbolizing the seasons of the year are housed in the Convent of St George; the midget-jester sculpture – Chlumec nad Cidlinou).

A supplementary pictorial adjunct are the vistas of Chinese landscapes and architecture decorating the walls of several other rooms at Troja. They are modelled on the engravings by Johann Adam Delsenbach (1687–1764) destined for the manual “Historische Architektur” by Johann Bernhard Fischer of Erlach (1721).

A valuable – and in the context of Central European art history unique – feature of the Troja garden is the collection of terracotta vases comprising vases of three different size categories. Some of them are shaped as craters with rims carved and moulded in the shape of festoon ornaments, flute-like forms and fantastic figures, putti and the heraldic symbols of the Sternberg-Malzano families (the latter being the family from which Sternberg's wife descended). This lively series of sculptured works of art is concluded by the busts of different emperors and allegorical figures – the work of Bombelli, a sculptor whose creative achievements are documented by the Slavkov (Austerlitz) Château collection. Except for this preserved fragment of his work, Bombelli remains a largely unknown figure of art history. All these decorative additions display a high standard of craftsmanship and a style of conception fitting in marvellously with the integrated and stylistically impeccable system of architecture, sculpture, painting and landscape gardening of Troja Château now experiencing a new lease of life.

The permanent exhibition of the Prague Municipal Art Gallery installed in the renovated halls of the château introduces the public to the Galleries' collection of 19th century Czech painting and sculpture. The oldest items of this collection were acquired thanks to the initiative of the Prague Municipal Council responding to the proposal of Umělecká beseda (Art Society) submitted way back in 1865 and envisaging a gradual purchase of the works of leading Prague artists. In this venture, Prague followed the example of other European cities building up their own extensive art galleries. A group of enthusiasts led by Josef Mánes cherished the vision of a magnificent art collection designed to document the true value and specificity of Czech art in the context of European culture. In the initial phase of the project, attention concentrated on paintings. But as years went by, paintings ceased to be the exclusive object of interest and the collection

serenity – the placid, tranquil and ultimately static appeal of a memorial.

Godyn is also the author of the fresco compositions decorating the stables. In their architectural design and style of decoration, they document the Baroque cult of the thorough-bred horse.

Baroque stables developed into what was, theoretically and practically, an autonomous object of interior design. Though badly ravaged by time and neglect, the frescos still reflect the distinctive qualities of Godyn's conception. Set in elaborate decorative frames, they present a spectacular succession of mythological stories built around horses and their legendary ancestors ranging from Centaurs to Pegasus. Conceived in the same spirit as Godyn's frescos is the work of another painter associated with Troja, the author of the florid decorative compositions preserved in the groundfloor section of the château building.

While in Prague, Godyn worked exclusively for Troja Château. Obviously designed for Troja interiors were Godyn's canvases preserved today as mere fragments of originally large-scale compositions. Some of them are housed in different galleries, others are no longer extant. Direct continuity with the style of composition cultivated by Nicolas Poussin is the keynote of Godyn's paintings covering Old Testament themes: Abraham Expeleing Hagar, Juda and Tamar into the Wilderness of Beersheba (Genesis, 21:14, 22:19), 1692; National Gallery collection – Convent of St George) and the somewhat more rigid Death of Sapphira relating the fate of Ananias' wife who, like her husband, fell dead at the rebuke of St Peter (Acts, 5:1ff) //Prague Castle Gallery, depository//. In contrast, Godyn's painting portraying Jael and Sisera (Judges 5) //1698; National Gallery collection at Karlova Koruna Château, Chlumec nad Cidlinou// develops the style of visual compression applied in the lower sections of the painting in the Grand Hall of Troja Château.

A rare degree of stylistic homogeneity consonant with Godyn's well-balanced conception characterizes the white-marble sculptures de-

*Fountain on Château terrace. Copies of statues by Petr Vitvar, 1989*

*Allegorical painting (ceiling) by Francesco and Giovanni Francesco Marchetti (1689–1690)*





Šembera and ten paintings by Josef Navrátil (over one half of these paintings have formed a standard part of the collection since 1902).

*Stanislav Hanzík, The Judgement of Paris. Detail, 1989*

*Allegorical painting (ceiling) by Francesco and Giovanni Francesco Marchetti (1689–1690)*

began to incorporate the works of sculptors who were either natives of Prague or lived and worked in Prague.

The structure of the oldest section of the 19th century art collection – today representing one tenth of the Prague Municipal Gallery's total art fund – reflects all the vices and virtues of the cultural programme then sponsored by the Municipal Council. The Council's purchase policies were not based on any systematic plan or conception. The very first purchases were largely a matter of trial-and-error with chance and personal favour prevailing over an integrated acquisition programme. As to discriminating choice and balanced representation, the collection left a good deal to be desired. Some of the major artists of the day (Soběslav Pinkas, Karel Purkyně) were not represented at all. Others received a negligible amount of attention. Thus Josef Mánes, the actual initiator of the collection is still represented by only one of his paintings. In contrast, the much-prized celebrities of 19th century Czech painting meeting with official recognition and the acclaim of the Prague patriotic society of the day are represented by an impressive corpus of paintings offering rich material for closer analytical study (Václav Brožík). A wholesome corrective to the unbalanced cultural policies of the past was provided by the contemporary programme of the Prague Municipal Art Gallery. Functioning since 1963 as an independent cultural institution and using research facilities of its own, the Prague Municipal Art Gallery has done a lot to fill in the blank spots in 19th century Czech cultural geography as represented by the collection.

A reminder of the more distant past is the set of 17 Baroque paintings. Twelve of them form part of a larger cycle of paintings portraying the Mayors of Prague. The portrait series extends up to the present day. Czech painting of the first half of the 19th century is represented by a minor cross-section of the works of Louisa Piepenhagen, August Piepenhagen, Josef

A far more coherent pattern of representation characterizes Czech painting of the second half of the 19th century. A remarkable set of paintings, donated to the city of Prague by Hippolyte Gallait, represents the work of Jaroslav Čermák. But the best represented Czech painter is Václav Brožík whose works form the most extensive part of the collection. Apart from the intriguing genre-studies revealing a less familiar and, for the contemporary observer, more appreciable facet of Brožík's work, the bulk of the selection comprises some of Brožík's ambitious canvases inspired by Czech national history. These include the formerly much-vaunted "Master John Hus Facing the Council of Constance" bought from the proceeds of the voluntary public collection organized by the 'Council for the Purchase of Brožík's Huss for the Benefit of the Czech Nation' – 1883 and the "Election of George of Poděbrady as King of Bohemia". Both canvases are installed in the Brožík Hall. The landscapists described in Czech art history as the "National Theatre Generation" are represented, apart from minor masters, by the interesting work of Julius Mařák and Antonín Chittussi. No less remarkable are the works of Viktor Barvitius, Alois Bubák, František Ženíšek, Jakub Schikaneder, Beneš Knüpfer and Felix Jenewein. The 'turn-of-the-century' masters include Maximilian Pirner, Jan Preisler, Max Švabinský, Luděk Marold, Adolf Liebscher, Mikoláš Aleš and many other celebrated masters.

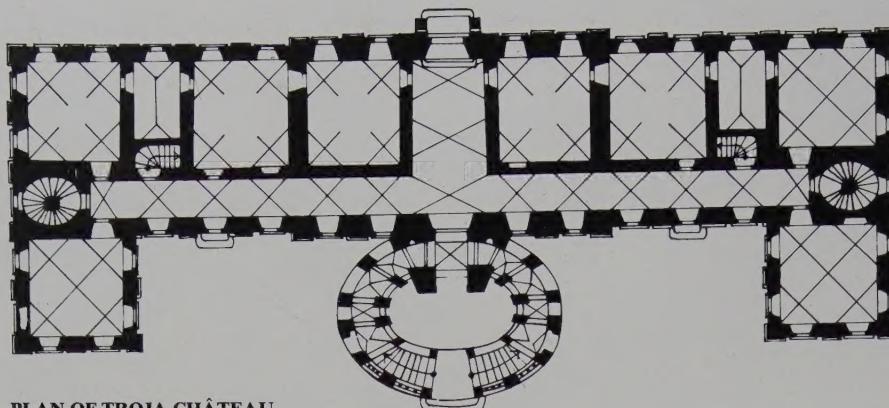
Originating at a much later date, the sculptural part of the collection is inevitably more fragmentary in style and character. Its function is that of a mere supplement. The most valuable items are the sculptural compositions of Josef Václav Myslbek.

For long years in the past, the collection of 19th century Czech art, the property of the Prague Municipal Gallery, lacked a permanent exhibition base. On several occasions the collection was exhibited in the Municipal House (the last exhibition was mounted in the winter 1971/1972). The newly reconstructed halls of Troja Château made it possible for the gallery to ensure broad public access to the collection through the installation of a permanent exhibition.

Some of the halls, rooms and garden enclosures of Troja Château serve as facilities for lectures, concerts and theatre performances. Troja Château, one of Bohemia's most valuable architectural landmarks, has thus become a living part of Prague's cultural life.

LUBOŠ LANCINGER  
MILAN PAVLÍK  
PAVEL PREISS  
OTA KUKLA





PLAN OF TROJA CHÂTEAU

**A – Upper Terrace**

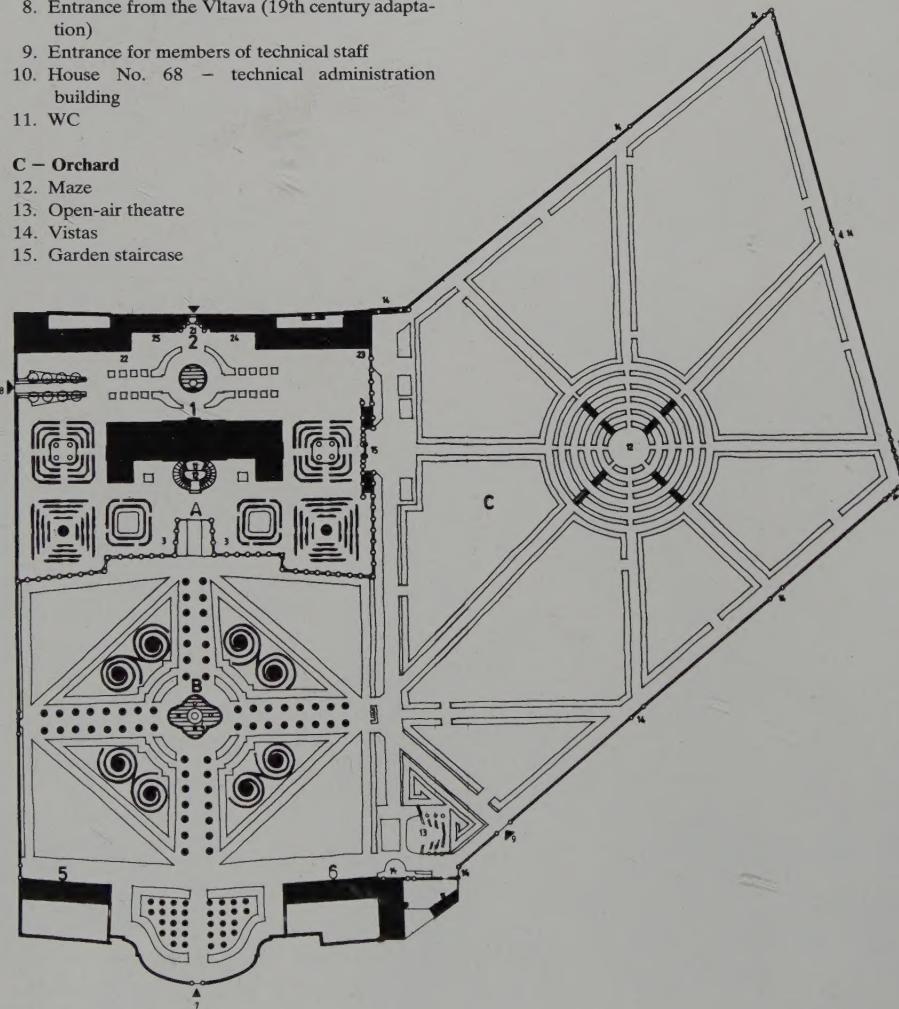
1. Château
- 1.1. Garden staircase
- 1.2. Tartarus
2. Out-buildings
- 2.1. Entrance of bar and wine tavern
- 2.2. Entrance of Exhibition Hall in the stable
- 2.3. Entrance of snack bar
- 2.4. Cafeteria
- 2.5. Administration offices of Troja Château
3. Terrace walls with ceramic vases

**B – Lower Section of the Garden**

4. Grand Fountain
5. Gardeners' House
6. Orangery
7. Former main entrance
8. Entrance from the Vltava (19th century adaptation)
9. Entrance for members of technical staff
10. House No. 68 – technical administration building
11. WC

**C – Orchard**

12. Maze
13. Open-air theatre
14. Vistas
15. Garden staircase







Authors: Luboš Lančinger, Milan Pavlík (architecture)

Pavel Preiss (painting and sculpture)

Ota Kukla (Prague Municipal Art Gallery collection)

Jiří Hejtmánek (reconstruction of Troja Chateau)

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